

Message Text

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22

ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 OMB-01

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R 270915Z SEP 76

FM AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6240

INFO AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SINGAPORE 4469

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, SN

SUBJECT: TIMING OF PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS IN SINGAPORE

REF: A) SINGAPORE 4286 B) SINGAPORE 3438

1. SOME RECENT STRAWS IN THE WIND SUGGEST THAT SINGAPORE'S LONG-ANTICIPATED GENERAL ELECTIONS WILL TAKE PLACE BETWEEN LATE NOVEMBER AND CHRISTMAS ONE HINT CAME FROM THE LAW AND ENVIRONMENT MINISTER, EDDIE BARKER, WHO SAID ON SEPTEMBER 21 THAT A BY-ELECTION WOULD NOT BE HELD IN THE SEPOY LINES CONSTITUENCY RESIGNED SOME TEN DAYS EARLIER BY THE DISGRACED FORMER MINISTER OF STATE, WEE TOON BOON (REF A). BARKER STATED THAT THE GOS CONSIDERED THE COSTS OF SUCH A BY-ELECTION AS UNJUSTIFIABLE CONSIDERING THE FORESEEN ELIMINATION OF THE SEAT "IN THE NEXT FEW MONTHS WHEN PARLIEMENT IS DISSOLVED FOR THE GENERAL ELECTION."

2. ANOTHER CLUE, AND THE FIRST SPECIFIC INDICATION AS TO WHEN ELECTIONS MIGHT ACTUALLY OCCUR, CAME TO THE EMBASSY'S ATTENTION LAST WEEK. A SINGAPOREAN ACADEMIC, WHO WILL BE TRAVELING ABROAD, INFORMED USIS THAT HE HAD TO RETURN TO SINGAPORE NO LATER THAN NOVEMBER 12 WHEN "AN IMPORTANT GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCEMENT WOULD BE MADE." OUR SOURCE REFUSED TO CONFIRM OUR HUNCH REGARDING ELECTIONS BUT INDICATED, UPON INQUIRY, THAT OURS WAS A
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GOOD GUESS. LENDING FURTHER WEIGHT TO THIS NEWS WAS OUR SOURCE'S

ASSERTION THAT HE HIMSELF HAD BEEN CHOSEN BY THE GOVERNMENT
TO STAND FOR ELECTION.

3. IF DISSOLUTION OF PARLIAMENT IS INDEED ANNOUNCED ON
NOVEMBER 12, ELECTIONS COULD BE SCHEDULED FOR AS EARLY AS
NOVEMBER 27 (REF B). THIS WOULD BE WITHIN THE TIMEFRAME
MENTIONED BY BARKER AND SUCH A SCHEDULE WOULD APPEAR IN KEEPING
WITH PAST PRACTICE OF SHORT CAMPAIGN PERIODS. ALTERNATIVELY,
ELECTIONS COULD BE CALLED FOR THE PERIOD BETWEEN CHRISTMAS AND
THE CHINESE NEW YEAR (FEBRUARY 18).
HOLDRIDGE

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